

23 OCT 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

FROM : Sayre Stevens
Deputy Director for National Foreign
Assessment

SUBJECT : Agency-wide Vacancy Notice System

REFERENCE : D/Pers Memo dtd 13 Oct 78;
Same Subject

1. The National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC) recognizes the need for developing managers and employees who are aware of and familiar with the activities of the Agency across directorate lines. While NFAC also favors more widespread use than in the past of a vacancy notice mechanism, we do not recommend a mandatory Agency-wide system for all positions.

2. A survey of NFAC components reveals that most would prefer to retain the current vacancy notice system. There is general agreement with the views outlined in the attachment to the Director of Personnel's memorandum to the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, dated 14 September 1978. Continuation of the present system of vacancy notices allows for a range of dissemination options depending on the peculiarities of the positions to be filled.

3. The current vacancy notice system not only allows Offices to meet their substantive requirements but, equally important, it also provides employees with opportunities for their overall career progression. In the judgment of most NFAC managers the current system is beneficial to employees in that it facilitates the development of upward mobility programs on both the directorate and component levels. It also allows for the successful implementation of the Personnel Development Plan (PDP). For those employees who are genuinely interested in (and qualified for) positions available throughout NFAC and in other directorates, the recently constituted inter-directorate rotational assignment program is an excellent starting point. Supplementing this formal effort, NFAC Offices encourage rotational assignments throughout

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the directorate and the Agency as evidenced by their PDP submissions during the past four years. In addition to the foregoing, the current system provides NFAC managers with adequate flexibility to utilize the most appropriate selection process for any given vacancy or group of vacancies within their components, i.e., direct hire, intra-directorate vacancy, internal lateral transfers, an Agency-wide call, etc. For all of these reasons, NFAC believes that the advantages of the current vacancy notice system outweigh the disadvantages inherent in a mandatory Agency-wide system.

4. Finally, a mandatory Agency-wide vacancy notice system for all grade levels or a majority of positions could cause substantial delays in filling positions.

5. In response to the queries presented in paragraph seven of reference, the following information is provided:

a. Most upward mobility programs, both the Advancement Opportunities Program and internal NFAC Office programs, are geared to developing professional employees from the clerical ranks. These positions would have to be excepted from mandatory circulation so that the appropriate testing and processing, and "apprenticeship," could take place. It would also become very difficult to develop meaningful and lasting career development tracks for employees in both the upward mobility and PDP programs.

b. This question appears to assume that there will exist some form of centralized apparatus to ensure equities in the competitive promotion process. Aside from being difficult to administer, it is not clear that a competitive selection program would have very much of an impact on the promotion process.

c. If changes are limited to a specific grade or function, we believe that there are at least two viable options, e.g., either the home base concept carried out in the DDO under which specific components have overall career development cognizance over groups of employees even though they are assigned outside of their components or the concept of functional career subgroups as exist in many of the DDA Offices. We strongly urge that the establishment of any separate functional career service groups be considered for only those functions which are utilized on an Agency-wide basis and that allocation of ceiling remain within NFAC components.

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d. Career Service screening of applications from outside of the Career Service would necessarily be more extensive than it would be for those who are in the component whose potential has been previously evaluated. The increase in numbers and variety of applicants would require screening at some level before the supervisor gets involved in the selection process and this would obviously require additional manpower. We see no offsets in any of the options offered since career management functions in other areas would have to continue much as they currently exist.

e. Selections would have to be closely monitored in order to document and adequately justify the component's decisions. Consistent in-house selections, based primarily on the important experience factor, would pose problems. In order to ensure that employees perceive that the most qualified applicant has been selected, it probably would be necessary to establish a separate review mechanism.

6. For all of the above reasons we would favor making wider use of the existing vacancy notice system. If it is decided to modify the existing system in some manner, we recommend that it be accomplished on a limited, experimental basis over a substantial period of time. It is suggested that an experiment could be conducted on an Agency-wide basis with entry level positions in order to ensure ourselves that all of our internal resources have been exploited. Within this experiment, we must maintain the proper mix of internal and external selections and the fulfillment of our goals with regard to minorities. As an alternative, it is suggested that an experiment could be conducted with a specific category of employees whose functions are similar throughout the Agency, such as records management officers.

[Redacted Signature Box]

for Sayre Stevens

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